Increase in airfares

3258. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have been considering to increase international and domestic airfares; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the decision taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK) : (a) and (b) In order to partly offset the increase in the cost of Air Turbine Fuel (ATF) and other operating costs, Indian Airlines has increased the domestic fares by 15% *w.e.f.* 26th March, 2003. Some restructuring of the fares has also been carried out in order to minimise the inter-regional variations. In case of international air travel, Air India has increased the fares by only 5–7% across the board in all regions and Indian Airlines by 7–18% from India to South East Asia from April, 2003. Besides Air India has also imposed an additional surcharge of US $ 5 on account of increase in ATF prices.This increase has been effected to partly offset the increase in operating cost since the last increase in January 2001.

Concession on carrying human remains from Gulf

3259. SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Air India provides free transportation of human remains and free air ticket for accompanying passenger and maximum of 50 kg personal effects, to help workers in Gulf region who are unable to afford costs;

(b) if so, whether the Air India has commenced the implementation of the above scheme;

(c) whether the facility is also extended by the Indian Airlines; and

(d) if not, whether Government would consider to extend it in the Indian Airlines also?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Air India provides

free transportation for the carriage of human remains and offers one free ticket for the accompanying passenger with a maximum of 50 kg for the personal effects of the deceased to help labourers and workers in Gulf who cannot afford to pay for the carriage. This is subject to an endorsement from the Indian mission.

(c) and (d) Indian Airlines also provides free transportation for the carriage of human remains. However, it does not provide complimentary tickets to persons accompanying the human remains due to its critical financial position.

Air service between Aurangabad and Jeddah

3260. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have any plan to introduce a direct flight to Jeddah for Haj pilgrims from Aurangabad in view of the long standing demand of local people; and

(b) if so, whether this flight would be introduced from the next Haj pilgrimage period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK) : (a) and (b) No such proposal is under consideration, at present. Starting a new point is a policy decision which is taken only after due consultation with Ministry of External Affairs and Central Haj Committee keeping in view the costs involved and facilities available at the airport.

Purchase of 'Air Force One' type aircrafts

3261. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether India has entered into negotiations with Boeing of the US for purchase of three 'Air Force One' type aircrafts exclusively for the use of the President, the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister;

(b) if so, the special features of these aircrafts; and

(c) the cost of these aircrafts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK) : (a) to (c) The Government is planning to